

Dear Senators ,

Have you thought any more about the cruelty and hardship of detaining any new West Papuan refugees in offshore detention centres?

I believe there is to be an important vote tomorrow and then another one in two weeks' time .I hope you will really search your conscience on this issue. As you prepare to vote soon , would you consider voting against the new proposed law ,please?

Even this week, the PM has agreed that he will comply with Indonesia's request for written assurances on our Immigration Policy. How can we tolerate another country interfering with our policies?

You will recall Mr.Howard as saying" WE will decide who will come into this country and We will decide what's best for us." As recently as last Friday, Mr. Howard said much the same thing, in reference to Lord Goldsmith's comments about Guantanamo Bay prison.

To Quote "Irrespective of what Lord Goldsmith or indeed anyone else ,may say, we make up our own mind about these things and that's our position. We listen to what others say on these matters. We don't necessarily agree with them on everything." (*John Howard -reported in "the Age." 12/05/05)

How do you reconcile this with Australia bending over backwards to appease Indonesia over the refugees ? It seems rather like a big contradiction.

If we send refugees to Nauru , Manus Island or anywhere else which is decreed as outside of Australian law, are we not creatlng our own version of Guantanamo Bay prison? By all accounts, they are hellish places, givng the detainees no hope .

Australia has definite obligations, having signed an International Agreeemnt on Refugees. How can we forget to honour this?

The Government of Australia does not get offended by what other countries do, yet we allow them to dictate to us in a number of ways. e.g; USA and Indonesia . I would think we should be very 'offended' by the mistreatment and torture which is taking place in West Papua and which is driving people to leave, as well as in East Timor which threatens to erupt any time thanks to Indonesia , again. I watched "Foreign Correspondent" on TV last week and it brought home to me again, the horrors of Indonesian occupation. But we are not offended !!

I am ashamed to be an Australian when such an unjust ,unkind law is mooted. Just to conciliate our neighbour, which has an appalling Human Rights record. I am not talking about giving the West Papuans, independence. That is a different issue .

I hope you will be brave and honest and that you will oppose this change to the Law and will encourage your colleagues to do the same

Wendy Hebbard Moolap . Victoria.